

Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ISO-00 CU-04 IO-13 CIAE-00 DODE-00

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 752

INFO AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

USMISSION NATO

CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L PEKING 1101

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, FR, CH

SUBJECT: PEKING IMPRESSIONS OF POMPIDOU VISIT

REF: HONG KONG 9275

1. ALL OUR CONTACTS WITH FRENCH EMBASSY HERE PROFESS
TO BE PLEASED WITH OUTCOME OF POMPIDOU VISIT, AND WE
AGREE WITH HONG KONG THAT UNUSUALLY LONG INTERVIEW WITH MAO
AND PERSONAL ESCORT BY CHOU EN-LAI CONSTITUTED
TOUCHES DESIGNED TO INSURE FRENCH PLEASURE (THOUGH
CHOU CUSTOMARILY DOES ACCOMPANY VISITING HEADS OF STATE
OR GOVERNMENT ON TOURS OUTSIDE PEKING). FRENCH HAVE
TOLD US THAT ARRANGEMENTS FOR VISIT WERE MADE WITH
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USUAL LAVISH CHINESE ATTENTION TO DETAIL, AND MEETINGS

WERE VERY CORDIAL. NEVERTHELESS, WE UNDERSTAND FROM PRESS SOURCES ACCOMPANYING POMPIDOU THAT CHINESE WERE SOMEWHAT LESS THAN PLEASED BY MADAME POMPIDOU'S LAST MINUTE DECISION NOT TO ACCOMPANY PRESIDENT AND BY THE MANNER IN WHICH THE DECISION WAS CONVEYED. POMPIDOU ALSO BRUISED CHINESE SENSITIVITIES A BIT BY BRINGING AN ENTIRE STAFF PREPARED TO PRODUCE FRENCH BANQUET, COMPLETE WITH PASTRIES. CUSTOMARLY, VISITING HEADS OF STATE USE CHINESE FACILITIES.

2. DESPITE APPARENTLY LENGTHY DISCUSSIONS OVER CONTENT OF COMMUNIQUE, WE FOUND IT A SURPRISINGLY TEPID DOCUMENT. FOR EXAMPLE, THOUGH THERE WAS REFERENCE TO AN EXTENSIVE EXCHANGE OF VIEWS ON PROBLEMS RELATING TO THE THIRD WORLD, DISARMAMENT AND INTERNATIONAL TRADE, THERE WERE NO SPECIFICS AND NO REFERENCE TO COMMON POSITIONS. THE SECTION ON TRADE WAS SIMILARLY VAPID, WITH BOTH SIDES AGREEING ONLY TO "STUDY FURTHER THE PRACTICAL POSSIBILITIES" OF DEVELOPING ECONOMIC RELATIONS. (PEKING 1094 REPORTS THAT FRENCH WERE DISAPPOINTED THAT NO FURTHER PROGRESS WAS MADE IN FIRING UP AGREEMENT ON CONCORD PURCHASES.)

3. THERE WERE A NUMBER OF INDICATIONS THAT CHINESE WERE VERY PREOCCUPIED WITH SOVIET INTENTIONS IN ASIA AND EUROPE AND PROBABLY LEANED ON FRENCH FOR A STRONGER STATEMENT OPPOSING GREAT POWER HEGEMONISM. IN FACT, POMPIDOU WAS GREETED AT AIRPORT AND ALONG THE ARRIVAL ROUTE WITH BANNERS HAILING THE STRUGGLE OF THE FRENCH AND CHINESE PEOPLES AGAINST HEGEMONISM, A HEAVY-HANDED TOUCH THAT ONE FRENCH DIPLOMAT FOUND A BIT "RUDE". (WE ALSO SUSPECT THAT POMPIDOU'S PRESS CONFERENCE REMARKS IN FAVOR OF RELAXATION OF TENSIONS WITH THE SOVIET UNION MIGHT ALSO HAVE BEEN IN RESPONSE TO THESE OVERT SIGNS OF PRESSURE.) IN THIS SAME CONNECTION, WE ALSO FIND IT INTERESTING THAT COMMUNIQUE REFERS TO CHINESE SUPPORT FOR EUROPEAN EFFORTS TO SAFEGUARD INDEPENDENCE, SOVEREIGNTY AND SECURITY OF RESPECTIVE COUNTRIES AND TO UNITE FOR PRESERVATION OF COMMON SECURITY, WHILE FRENCH REITERATE POLICY OF "DETENTE", UNDERSTANDING AND COOPERATION AMONG ALL PEOPLES OF THE CONTINENT."

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4. LOOKING FROM THE OUTSIDE IN, WE FOUND ENTIRE VISIT SOMEWHAT BLAND. DECORATIONS AND CROWDS ALONG ROUTE OF MARCH CORRESPONDED ROUGHLY WITH ARRANGEMENTS MADE FOR RECENT CONGO PRESIDENT N'GOUABI'S VISIT (ABOUT "CLASS C" ON THE PEKING SCALE) AND WERE NOWHERE NEAR THE LEVEL OF NORTH VIETNAMESE OR CAMBODIAN RECEPTIONS. OBSERVERS AT SEPT 11 FORMAL BANQUET IN GREAT HALL OF THE PEOPLE DESCRIBED ATMOSPHERE AS POLITE, BUT NOT ANIMATED, AND CHOU'S TOUGH LINE SPEECH PROBABLY

DID NOT CONTRIBUTE TO THE JOLLITY. ONE FRIENDLY AMBASSADOR WHO
ATTENDED BANQUET SAID THAT CHOU AND POMPIDOU HARDLY SPOKE TO ONE
ANOTHER.

5. IN SUM, FROM PEKING IT APPEARS THAT POMPIDOU CAME TO
PEKING WITH LITTLE TO NEGOTIATE, BUT INTENT ON A HIGH
VISIBILITY STATE VISIT, REALIZING IN MANY WAYS THE UNFULFILLED
WISH OF THE LATE PRESIDENT DEGAULLE. THAT HE ACHIEVED. THE
CHINESE THEMSELVES MAY NOT HAVE BEEN AS PLEASED AS THE FRENCH.
BRUCE

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